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The New Testament in Color A Multiethnic Bible Commentary

August 6, 2024 | \$60, 792 pages, hardcover | 978-0-8308-1409-1

“The New Testament in Color is informative, prophetic, reflective, and inspiring. The authors, drawn from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, are self-aware of their social location and write with a hermeneutics of trust in Scripture. This volume makes an extraordinary contribution to New Testament studies and sets the standard for future commentaries.”

—Lynn H. Cohick, distinguished professor of New Testament and director of Houston Theological Seminary, Houston Christian University

Engaging the Whole Body of Christ in Interpretation

I was sitting in a coffee shop, books taking up too much space on the tiny table in front of me, bemoaning the lack of attention the academy paid to the Black church and the distinctive interpretative habits of African American church leaders and scholars. My time in religious higher education had signaled in ways large and small its belief that the tradition that shaped me had little to say to the rest of the world. The important ideas and trends arose in Europe or White North American spaces.

Black Christians were deemed theologically simplistic or dangerous. I longed for people to know the tradition as I experienced it: life giving, spiritually robust, and intellectually stimulating. We had wrestled with God and found our way toward faith in the context of anti-Black racism often perpetuated by other Christians. I wanted to make that story and the fruits of our labor known. I still do.

While I sipped my coffee, I was struck by an idea that served as the genesis for this book. I often complained about White scholars neglecting African American voices, but I knew little about Asian American biblical interpretation, its theological and historical developments, and the gifts it offered to the body of Christ. The same was true regarding Latino/a interpretation and the Bible-reading habits of First Nations and Indigenous peoples.

In some ways, I was a hypocrite. I wanted people to attend to the contributions of my community without being similarly invested in others. I needed to spend less time complaining and more time listening. *The New Testament in Color: A Multiethnic Commentary on the New Testament* began with that insight. It was a hope that we might come together across ethnic difference and create something beautiful.

I wondered, “What fruit might come from the various ethnic groups sharing space in North America working together to produce a commentary?” What did I need to learn from my brothers and sisters in Christ beyond the Black-White binary that shaped my imagination in the American South?

It was natural that my lament was directed to where the power resides in the academy. In 2019, the Society of Biblical Literature, the largest body of biblical scholars in the world, did a study of its membership. [That study](#) showed that 86 percent (2,732 of 3,159) of its members who described themselves as college or university faculty were of European or Caucasian descent.

Given the demographics of the United States (and the world), it is more than fair to say that we experience a disproportionate White or European dominance of biblical studies. If God gives his Spirit without measure and equips the entire body of Christ to read and interpret the Bible, then it is a tragedy when the whole body of Christ is not engaged in the process of reading, interpreting, and applying these texts. No one part of the body has the right to speak for the whole. We need each other.

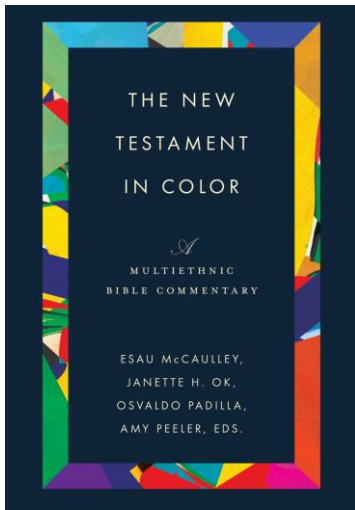
Does a lack of ethnic diversity matter? Isn't biblical interpretation simply a matter of translating verbs and nouns, linking together ideas as they come together into sentences, paragraphs, narratives, or letters? I was told that the only thing we needed to be good interpreters was proper understanding of the historical context alongside requisite grammatical, text-critical, and linguistic expertise.



Karin DeHaven, academic publicist
kdehaven@ivpress.com or ivpress.com/media

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—**Lynn H. Cohick**, distinguished professor of New Testament and director of Houston Theological Seminary, Houston Christian University

I do not want to push any of those important and vital skills aside. All the contributors in this volume labored hard to gain the aforementioned tools of the scholarly trade. It is precisely because I believe that biblical texts are God’s Word to his people that we must do our very best to read them well and carefully.

But here is the rub. It matters that we have diverse representation in the process of biblical interpretation because it is always *ourselves* as persons with our experiences, biases, gifts, and liabilities that we bring to the text. We are not disembodied spirits with no histories or cultures. We are not exegetical machines; we are interpreting persons.

We come from somewhere, and that somewhere has left its mark whether we acknowledge it or not. When one culture dominates the discourse, we are closing ourselves off from what the Holy Spirit is saying among other cultures. Socially located interpretation, when rooted in a trust in God’s Word, is a gift from particular cultures to the whole church. Socially located interpretation reflects a trust that none of our experiences are wasted, that all of who we are is useful to God.

Our cultures are not something we are called to set aside in the Bible-reading process because our cultures and ethnicities have their origins in God (Eph 3:14-15). Every culture and ethnicity, because it was created by people made in the image of God, contains within it both evidence of its divine origins (Gen 1:28) and elements of the fall (Gen 3).

Stated differently, there are no perfect cultures. Every culture and people is challenged and made into the best version of itself through an encounter with the living God. Our cultures are restless until they find their rest in their Creator. None of them are left unchanged. God’s word to persons *and* cultures is always yes *and* no. He offers us all repentance for things that have gone astray and lauds our struggles toward the good, the true, and the beautiful.

Socially located biblical interpretation is nothing less than the record of the Spirit’s work through scriptural engagement among the different ethnicities and cultures of the world. Unfortunately, too often the sanctification of culture has been confused with the *Westernization* of culture. That lie has done tremendous damage to the church. God’s transfiguring work is not done in comparison with the West. Ethnicities do not become more holy as they approach likeness to Europe but to God.

That attempt of each culture and group to find themselves as they struggle to examine their lives and culture in light of the Word of God is instructive not just for them; it is instructive to the whole body of Christ. We can, through listening to the voices of others, see the ways in which our own location has at times hindered our ability to read the text well. What we are aiming for, then, is mutual edification.

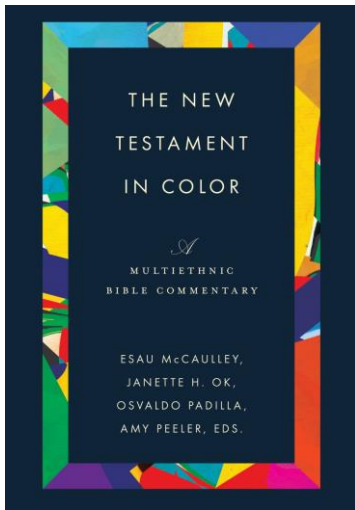
—taken from the introduction by Esau D. McCaulley



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Exegetical Expertise from Diverse Scholars

Lisa Marie Bowens is associate professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary and the author of two books, *An Apostle in Battle: Paul and Spiritual Warfare in 2 Corinthians 12:1-10* (Mohr Siebeck) and *African American Readings of Paul: Reception, Resistance, and Transformation* (Eerdmans).

Mateus F. de Campos (PhD, Cambridge University) is an associate professor of New Testament and academic dean at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, MA. He has served as a pastor for ten years in his hometown of Americana, Brazil, and has lived in Canada, England, and the United States. He is the author of *Resisting Jesus: A Narrative and Intertextual Analysis of Mark's Portrayal of the Disciples of Jesus* (Brill, 2021), among other writings.

Diane G. Chen (PhD, Fuller Theological Seminary) is professor of New Testament at Palmer Theological Seminary of Eastern University. She is the author of several books: *God as Father in Luke-Acts* (Peter Lang, 2006), *Let Me More of Their Beauty See: Reading Familiar Verses in Context* (Smyth & Helwys, 2011), and *The Gospel of Luke in the New Covenant Commentary Series* (Wipf & Stock/Cascade, 2017).

Miguel Echevarría (PhD, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is associate professor of New Testament and Greek at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author of *The Future Inheritance of Land in the Pauline Epistles*, *40 Questions about the Apostle Paul*, and *Engaging the New Testament: A Short Introduction for Students and Ministers*. He has taught and ministered in the United States and Latin America.

Dennis R. Edwards (PhD, Catholic University of America) is associate professor of New Testament as well as vice president for church relations and dean of North Park Seminary, Chicago. He has worked in urban ministry for over three decades, including serving as a church planter in Brooklyn and Washington, DC. His books include *Might from the Margins*, the *Story of God Bible Commentary on 1 Peter*, and *Humility Illuminated: The Biblical Path Back to Christian Character* (IVP Academic).

Daniel K. Eng (DMin, Talbot School of Theology; PhD, University of Cambridge) is assistant professor of New Testament at Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon. His doctoral work was in Asian American Ministry (DMin) and biblical studies (PhD). He is the author or editor of several books, including *Eschatological Approval: The Structure and Unifying Motif of James and Faithful Ministry Through Chinese Churches in America*.

Rodolfo Galvan Estrada III (PhD, Regent University) is assistant professor of the New Testament at Vanguard University. His doctoral work is in biblical studies, he holds two master's degrees from Duke University, and a bachelor's from Vanguard University.

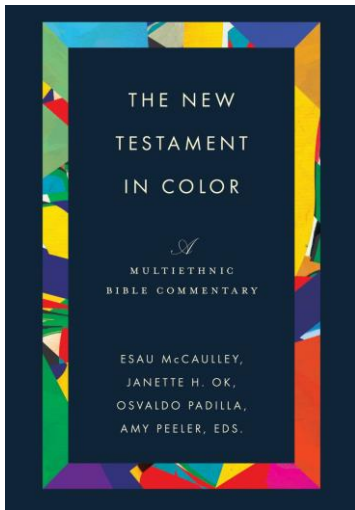
Christin J. Fort (PhD, Fuller Theological Seminary) is an assistant professor of clinical psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary where she specializes in the integration of clinical psychology and biblical theology. As an African American woman of enslaved descent, Dr. Fort's scholarship, research, teaching, preaching, and clinical practice lie at the intersections of faith, race, gender, emotional health, systemic sustainability, and relational wellbeing. Her work in these areas is regularly highlighted in a range of academic articles published in journals such as *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, and *Pastoral Psychology*.



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Michael J. Gorman (PhD, Princeton Theological Seminary) holds the Raymond E. Brown Chair in Biblical Studies and Theology at St. Mary's Seminary & University in Baltimore. His publications include books and articles on Paul, the Gospel of John, Revelation, and other subjects. He has also edited *Scripture and Its Interpretation: A Global, Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible*.

Gene L. Green (PhD, University of Aberdeen) is professor emeritus of New Testament at Wheaton College and Graduate School. Previously he served as professor of New Testament, dean, and rector of the Seminario ESEPA in Costa Rica and is currently a board member and professor for the Native American Course of Studies of the United Methodist Church. His publications include two commentaries in Spanish, English commentaries *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (Eerdmans) and *Jude and 2 Peter* (Baker Academic), and *Vox Petri: A Theology of Peter* (Cascade). Green is also the coauthor of *The New Testament in Antiquity* (Zondervan) and coeditor of *Majority World Theology* (IVP Academic) and the "Crosscurrents in Majority World and Minority Theology" series (Cascade).

T. Christopher Hoklotubbe (ThD Harvard University) is an assistant professor of classics at Cornell College (Mount Vernon, Iowa) and director of graduate studies for NAIIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community. He is the author of *Civilized Piety: The Rhetoric of Pietas in the Pastoral Epistles and the Roman Empire* (Baylor University Press, 2017) and has written articles on early Christianity and Indigenous interpretations of the Bible.

Marcus Jerkins (PhD, Baylor University) is a native of Atlanta, GA. He is the pastor of New Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL and an adjunct professor of New Testament studies in the Ecumenical Institute of St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, MD. He is the husband of Courtney and the father of three wonderful children.

Esau McCaulley (PhD, University of St Andrews) is an associate professor of New Testament at Wheaton College. He is the author of many works including *Sharing in the Son's Inheritance* and *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope*. He is a contributing opinion writer for the *New York Times*. His writings have also appeared in places such as *The Atlantic* and *Washington Post*.

Daniel I. Morrison (PhD, McMaster Divinity College) is a Lieutenant Commander in the United States Navy. As an active-duty chaplain and adjunct faculty member, his research focuses on the practical application of the biblical text to contemporary culture.

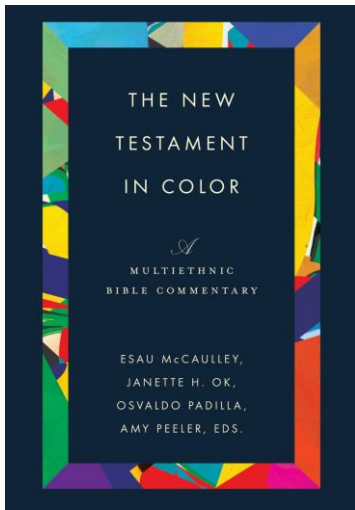
Julie Newberry (PhD, Duke University) is assistant professor of Scripture studies at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology (WI), having previously taught at Wheaton College (IL). A revised version of her dissertation has been published as *Lukan Joy and the Life of Discipleship: A Narrative Analysis of the Conditions that Lead to Joy according to Luke* (Mohr Siebeck, 2022), and her current book project combines intertextual and intersectional analysis in hopes of gaining fresh practical theological insights in the exegesis of New Testament narratives.



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Janette H. Ok (PhD, Princeton Theological Seminary) serves as associate professor of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary. She is the author of *Constructing Ethnic Identity in 1 Peter: Who You Are No Longer* (T&T Clark, 2021). Currently, she is writing a commentary on the *Letters of John* (NICNT, Eerdmans) and the book *To Be and Be Seen: Reading the New Testament as Asian Americans*, coauthored with Jordan J. Cruz Ryan (Baker Academic). She cochairs the Society of Biblical Literature's Asian and Asian American Hermeneutics unit and is a member of the Underrepresented Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee.

Osvaldo Padilla (PhD, Kings College, University of Aberdeen) is professor of New Testament and theology at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University, where he has taught for the last fifteen years. He has published on the Acts of the Apostles and Paul. He is a member of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas.

M. Sydney Park (PhD, University of Aberdeen) teaches biblical interpretation, New Testament theology, and Greek at Beeson Divinity School. Her research interests include racial reconciliation and the Gospel of Mark. Park previously taught New Testament at Crown College in St. Bonifacius, Minnesota (2004–2006), and she also served as a minister to children, youth, and young adults in Korean American churches in Illinois, Texas, and Washington for 11 years. She is the author of *Submission within the Godhead and the Church in the Epistle to the Philippians: An Exegetical and Theological Examination of the Concept of Submission in Philippians 2 and 3* and coeditor of *Honoring the Generations: Learning with Asian North American Congregations*.

Amy Peeler (PhD, Princeton Theological Seminary) is Kenneth T. Wessner Chair of Biblical Studies at Wheaton College and an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church (USA). Author of *Women and the Gender of God* (Eerdmans, 2022) and *Hebrews* (Commentaries for Christian Formation, Eerdmans, 2024), studying Scripture with others is her greatest professional joy.

Madison N. Pierce (PhD, Durham University) is associate professor of New Testament at Western Theological Seminary and the New Testament Editor for *Reviews of Biblical and Early Christian Studies*. She is the author of *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (CUP, 2020) and the coeditor of *Gospel Reading and Reception in Early Christian Literature* (CUP, 2022) and *Muted Voices of the New Testament* (T&T Clark, 2017).

Eric C. Redmond (PhD, Capital Seminary and Graduate School) is professor of Bible at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, IL, and associate pastor of preaching and teaching at Calvary Memorial Church in Oak Park, IL. He is the general editor of *Say It! Celebrating Expository Preaching in the African American Tradition*, the Preaching Magazine 2020 Book of the Year. Eric is a fellow of the St. Augustine Cohort of the Center for Pastor Theologians and a Teaching Fellow for the C. S. Lewis Institute-Chicago.

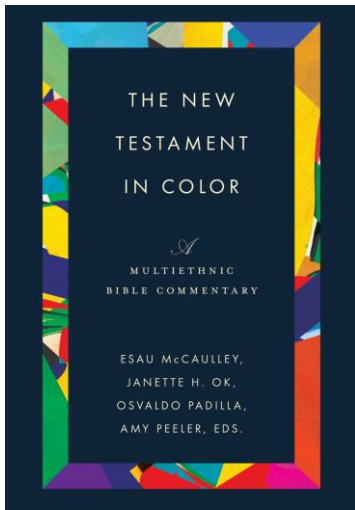
Jordan J. Cruz Ryan (PhD, McMaster University) is a half-Filipino American scholar. His work centers on the Jewish and Roman archaeological background of the New Testament and he is currently working on a book that presents a Filipino American reading of Jesus for IVP Academic. Dr. Ryan serves as associate professor of New Testament at Wheaton College.



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Kay Higuera Smith (PhD, Claremont Graduate University) is professor of biblical and religious studies and program director of the religious studies minor program at Azusa Pacific University. As a bicultural White Latina, she writes about social justice issues as they relate to gender, ethnicity, and decoloniality. She is the editor of *Postcolonial Evangelical Conversations: Global Awakenings in Theology and Praxis* (IVP Academic, 2014) and contributor to *Reading the Bible around the World: A Student's Guide to Global Approaches*, edited by Justin M. Smith and Federico A. Roth (IVP Academic, 2022). She currently has two books under contract, one on the historical figure of Mary of Nazareth, and another on Latinx Biblical Interpretation.

Ekaputra Tupamahu (PhD, Vanderbilt University) is assistant professor of New Testament and director of master's programs at Portland Seminary of George Fox University. He is the author of *Contesting Languages* (OUP, 2022).

Jarvis J. Williams (PhD, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is professor of New Testament Interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. He is the author of numerous books, including *The Spirit, Ethics, and Eternal Life: Paul's Vision for the Christian Life in Galatians* with IVP Academic.

Danny Zacharias (PhD, University of Aberdeen/Highland Theological College) is a Cree-Anishinaabe & Austrian man originally from Winnipeg, MB (Treaty One territory), with ancestors also residing in Treaty Two, Treaty Three, and Treaty Five territories. He lives in Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia) with his wife and four children in Wolfville, and he is associate dean and professor of New Testament Studies at Acadia Divinity College. He also serves as an adjunct faculty for NAIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community.



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